

VZCZCXRO8381
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHEG #0612/01 0901232
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 301232Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8703
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 000612

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

CENTCOM FOR AMMONS
OSD FOR AGUIRRE
DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA AND INR/B

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/28
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: ARCENT COMMANDER LOVELACE DISCUSSES BRIGHT STAR

Classified By: ECPO Minister-Counselor William Stewart for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. On March 9, U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT) Commanding General LTG James Lovelace made his introductory calls on MOD Chief of Staff LTG Sami Enan and MOD Training Division Chief Major General Mohammed Hisham. LTG Enan said that the size of the joint U.S.-Egyptian BRIGHT STAR exercise should match the magnitude of the U.S.-Egyptian relationship. LTG Lovelace dampened Egyptian expectations, noting that the high operational tempo of U.S. force deployments would preclude the commitment of U.S. forces on the large scale of the pre-2007 exercises. LTG Enan pressed for a large U.S. ground forces contingent in order to send a positive signal to the region, and asked for early resolution regarding the level of U.S. forces. LTG Lovelace agreed to resolve this issue as soon as possible. End summary.

¶2. (C) LTG Lovelace told his interlocutors that he made his first regional stop as ARCENT Commander in Egypt to stress the strategic importance of bilateral military relations. LTG Lovelace said that BRIGHT STAR 2009 should be Egyptian-planned, Egyptian-led and coalition-focused, and that a successful exercise would showcase Egyptian leadership in the region. LTG Lovelace noted that the operational quality of the 2007 BRIGHT STAR CPX exercise was excellent. He said that BRIGHT STAR is an essential exercise that has continued even as the U.S. has eliminated other exercises due to global commitments and a smaller force structure.

¶3. (C) LTG Lovelace said that the global demand on the U.S. Army is approximately 250,000 soldiers, most of whom are involved in combat or combat support operations. He said that because of these commitments, the U.S. force size in BRIGHT STAR will probably not be at the level of the pre-2007 exercise. LTG Lovelace emphasized that he would consult with Central Command leadership on this point, and would provide a specific response as soon as possible to the GOE request to increase the size of BRIGHT STAR 2009. He also stressed that a smaller ground force commitment would not reflect any change in the importance of the bilateral military relationship. He also noted that the costs of committing a large ground force for training are very high. LTG Lovelace requested that an Egyptian representative address the annual Land Forces Symposium on the topic of BRIGHT STAR at U.S. Army Central Headquarters in Atlanta in April.

¶4. (C) LTG Enan said he looked forward to positive cooperation on BRIGHT STAR in the context of sustaining and improving bilateral military relations. He noted the need to reach compromises as early as possible concerning the planning for BRIGHT STAR. LTG Enan emphasized the need for a

large commitment of U.S. ground forces in order to attract the participation of other allied countries and to send a clear signal to the region regarding the strong level of U.S.-Egyptian military cooperation.

15. (C) LTG Enan said he does not want the United States to send the "modest number" of ground forces that the U.S. committed for the 2007 BRIGHT STAR exercises. While he understood that the lower level of U.S. force participation in 2007 was due to U.S. commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, Enan feared that a repeat exercise of this size would send a negative signal to states in the region that assess U.S. capabilities and commitments. Enan urged LTG Lovelace to study the Egyptian request for larger land force participation, and said that he looked forward to effective communication and transparency between the two militaries in the run-up to the 2009 exercises. LTG Enan encouraged the U.S. to strike a balance between its commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, and its BRIGHT STAR responsibilities.

16. (C) In a separate meeting, MOD Training Division Chief Major General Mohammed Hisham praised U.S.-Egyptian military cooperation, especially in the field of educational exchanges, saying that there are currently 87 Egyptian officers studying at U.S. military institutes. MG Hisham said that the participation of U.S. land forces will be essential to the success of BRIGHT STAR. Noting U.S. military commitments in the region and stressing that he was "brainstorming," MG Hisham suggested that a U.S. ground force commitment of 3 to 4 companies could be acceptable if the U.S. were not able to send a larger contingent.

17. (C) MG Hisham noted several concerns that arose over

CAIRO 00000612 002 OF 002

staging U.S. Air Force elements out of the Cairo West airport during the 2007 BRIGHT STAR exercises. He cited accommodation shortages for personnel at Cairo West, transportation problems to and from the complex, and safety concerns for U.S. troops. MG Hisham proposed that the air force component of the 2009 exercises take place in Mubarak Military City in Hamam, approximately 30 miles southwest of Alexandria, which would offer a more secure environment. He agreed to provide all the necessary information for CENTCOM to conduct an airfield survey in Mubarak Military City. MG Hisham requested an increase from the one U.S. naval vessel that participated in the 2007 exercises. MG Hisham also requested a list of U.S. training courses available to Egyptian officers.

18. (C) Bio note: Before taking up his current post as training chief, MG Hisham said that he spent 5 years in Europe as Egypt's defense attache in Paris, and as a student at National War Colleges in France and Italy. He speaks French and some Italian. He conducted the meeting in Arabic through a translator. He said that he was previously posted as a commander in Egypt's Western military zone 500 kilometers west of Cairo. End bio note.

19. (U) ARCENT cleared this message.
RICCIARDONE